

**District 1 Town Meeting
Angelica Park Update
Wednesday, May 23, 2012
Fire Training Center
6:30 pm**

Attending: R. Corcoran, K. Murphy, D. Smith, L. Kelleher and citizens

Mr. Corcoran called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm. He introduced Kim Murphy, from the Berks County Conservancy and Doug Smith from Alvernia. He stated that Ms. Murphy and Mr. Smith will make a presentation followed by questions from the audience. He asked the citizens to limit their questions to the material covered in the presentation.

Ms. Murphy explained the Conservancy's mission and goal to provide recreation, preservation and environmental protection.

Mr. Smith stated that Alvernia became a partner when they made improvements to the ball fields with the Park. He stated that Alvernia is prepared to play a larger role by continuing to make improvements to the Park and relieve the City of the responsibility for park maintenance and security.

Ms. Murphy explained the history of the park in summary:

- 1880 - Angelica Ice Company built a dam to support their ice business
- 1945 – became a City park
- 1980-2000 - deterioration of the dam occurred
- 2001 - Tropical Storm Allison caused the dam to breach and wash out.
- 2001-04 – EPA, DEP and FEMA began speaking with the City about doing a wetland project at this site, as a supplement to the WWTP improvement project.
- 2004 – Angelica became a focus area for the Conservancy
- 2008 – former Mayor McMahon created the Angelica Park Advisory Commission, who established the vision for the park. Alvernia sponsored a graduate student to help develop the Environmental Center concept

Ms. Murphy described the boathouse renovation and triad partnership between City, Alvernia and the Conservancy. She also described the park and the environmental center. She stated that the trades unions provided volunteer labor to rehabilitate the center.

Ms. Murphy stated that the park is 44 acres. She displayed a map of the park that contains the following zones:

- **Zone 2** – wetlands
- **Zone 3** – mowed area

- **Zone 4** – baseball fields
- **Zone 5** – area controlled by RAWA
- **Zone 6** – trails
- **Zone 7** – woodland
- **Zone 8** – St Bernadine Street area
- **Zones 1, 9 and 10** – footprint for the boathouse and teaching garden

Ms. Murphy introduced former Mayor McMahon to those at the meeting and invited him to address the group.

Mr. McMahon stated that although the Conservancy and Alvernia are in partnership with the City, the Park remains fully open for public use. He stated that the Environmental Center and wetlands teaching garden stemmed from the WWTP project as a supplemental environmental project. He noted his knowledge of this area as he resided in this neighborhood at one time. He expressed the belief that parks on the periphery of the city should be maintained by other agencies to relieve the City of the responsibility. He expressed the belief that it is not who owns the park but who maintains the park and that the park remain open for public use. He expressed the belief that this is a positive project and partnership. He stated that the Millmont Environmental Gateway School uses the park regularly as a part of their curriculum.

Mr. Corcoran expressed his agreement that this partnership presents a win-win for all parties. He stated that the partnership will provide good park management, the City will remain the owner and the park will be open for public use.

Mr. Corcoran opened the floor for public comment.

A resident stated that he appreciates the newly well maintained park. He stated that the entry is beautiful and shows the public that the park is well maintained and open for public use.

A resident expressed her appreciation for the security patrol by Alvernia.

On the map of the park, Mr. Smith showed the group the Alvernia properties that are in the western side of the park and noted that security patrols will continue. He stated that if the partnership is approved Alvernia will look at further Park improvements, further maintenance and trash removal.

Ms. Murphy introduced members of the Advisory Commission along with Conservancy staff.

A resident inquired if the security patrol will continue during the summer when the College

is closed. Mr. Smith stated that the patrols will occur at all times, even outside the normal academic sessions.

Ms. Murphy stated that the Conservancy Camp starts June 11. She asked for input about additional programs and activities.

Mr. Corcoran stated that more the Park use, means less crime.

Mr. Corcoran encouraged residents to make additional comments.

As no one present offered further comment, Mr. Corcoran adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk